

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 6, 9, 14, and 17, and add new claim 21 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing configuration data, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of configuration values in a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein each node is associated with at least one of the configuration values, and each of the configuration values dictates how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves ~~and/or~~ and interacts with other application components, and wherein some of the nodes are only associated with a set of configuration values while other of the nodes are associated with a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component;

registering at least one application component with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component; and

notifying the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with the at least one node is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one query depends on at least one of a location of a configuration value in the tree and a data type of a configuration value.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the hierarchical tree is an Extensible Markup Language (XML) tree, and an XML schema describes the structure of the XML tree and the data types that are stored.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one application component comprises a plurality of components of an email application.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a node further includes a reference to at least one node.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the notifying step comprises:
modifying at least one configuration value that is associated with the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered;
storing in the hierarchical tree the configuration value that was modified, the configuration value being stored at the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered; and
notifying the at least one application component that the configuration value was modified.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of supplying the configuration value that was modified to the at least one application component.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of supplying at least one of the configuration values stored in the hierarchical tree to the at least one application component.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for managing configuration data, the computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of configuration values in a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein each node is associated with at least one of the configuration values, and each of the configuration values dictates how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves ~~and/or~~ and interacts with other application components, and wherein some of the nodes are only associated with a set of configuration values while other of the nodes are associated with a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component;

registering at least one application component with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component; and

notifying the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with the at least one of the plurality of nodes is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query.

10. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the at least one query depends on at least one of a location of a configuration value in the tree and a data type of a configuration value.

11. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the hierarchical tree is an Extensible Markup Language (XML) tree, and an XML schema describes the structure of the XML tree and the data types that are stored.

12. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the at least one application component comprises a plurality of components of an email application.

13. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein a node further includes a reference to at least one node.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the notifying step comprises:

modifying at least one configuration value that is associated with the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered;

storing in the hierarchical tree the configuration value that was modified, the configuration value being stored at the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered; and

notifying the at least one application component that the configuration value was modified.

15. (Original) The computer program product of claim 14, wherein the method further comprises the step of supplying the configuration value that was modified to the at least one application component.

16. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the method further comprises the step of supplying at least one of the configuration values stored in the hierarchical tree to the at least one application component.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer system for managing configuration data, the computer system comprising:

an organization module for organizing a plurality of configuration values into a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein each node is associated with at least one of the configuration values, and wherein some of the nodes are only associated with a set of configuration values while other of the nodes are associated with a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component;

a ~~tangible~~ storage medium for storing the plurality of configuration values in the hierarchical tree, each of the configuration values dictating how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves ~~and/or~~ and interacts with other application components;

a registration module for registering at least one application component with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component; and

a notification module for notifying the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with the at least one node is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query.

18. (Original) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the at least one query depends on at least one of a location of a configuration value in the tree and a data type of a configuration value.

19. (Original) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the hierarchical tree is an Extensible Markup Language (XML) tree, and an XML schema describes the structure of the XML tree and the data types that are stored.

20. (Original) The computer system of claim 17, wherein the at least one application component comprises a plurality of components of an email application.

21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of configuration values in the hierarchical tree includes all of the configuration data values that are required by the at least one application component.